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STATINTL

What Next in Russia?

The replacement of Khrushchev in itself is not as important as its consequences, which will manifest themselves very shortly.

Behind Brezhnev and Kosygin there stands another row of Communists prepared to introduce a still more "liberal" internal policy, but equally determined to uphold the monopoly of the Party. Symbolically spoken, these are the Ustinovs and the Tvardovskys. But behind them there now has arisen a new influential group of people, who are not presently in power, and who are much less committed to the cause of preserving the Party's dictatorship. These are, also symbolically speaking, the Solzhenitzyns, the Abramovs, the Doroshes, etc., who are to be found in all fields of Soviet public life.

The removal of Khrushchev, apart from other internal reasons, was dictated by the need of salvaging, at least superficially, the unity of the Communist bloc. This removal will permit the new Soviet leadership to paper over the rift with Mao. Yet, the government and the Party are faced with an insoluble dilemma. Behind the scenes there develops unrest and ever growing popular clamor for reforms. Acceptance by the Soviet Communists of Mao's line will be tantamount to the withdrawal of the promises of reforms. Further relaxation, on the other hand, will sharpen the conflict with Mao.

If the Ustinov-type "liberals" take over, there will be a temporary lull in the tug-of-war relationship between the leadership and the people. If the die-hard Stalinists, in the meantime, seize power—then the internal tensions will reach a dangerous point.

In the latter case, energetic elements amidst the people and the Army may pose their conditions. A Western policy suggestive of sympathy and friendliness towards those in the Soviet Union who express the aspirations of the people would be very helpful.

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